

Message Text

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53

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 121318Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7928

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 5264

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, SY

SUBJ: PERES ON POSSIBILITIES OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH SYRIA

1. ON AUGUST 8 DEFMIN PERES SAID THAT ISRAEL WAS READY FOR AN INTERIM AGREEMENT WITH SYRIA ON THE CONDITION HOWEVER THAT NOT A SINGLE JEWISH SETTLEMENT BE REMOVED FROM THE GOLAN. WE HAD OCCASION DURING RECENT CODEL VISIT TO ASK PERES ABOUT THIS REMARK AND EXPRESS OUR SKEPTICISM. PERES TOLD POL COUNSELOR THAT WHILE HE AGREED THAT IT WAS HARD TO IMAGINE WHAT KIND OF AN INTERIM AGREEMENT WITH SYRIA MIGHT BE ACHIEVED ON THIS BASIS, THERE WERE SOME POSSIBILITIES FOR MOVEMENT THAT NEED NOT INVOLVE REMOVING ANY ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS. WHEN ASKED TO EXPLAIN WHAT HE MEANT, HE HEDGED AND ADMITTED THAT HIS REMARKS WERE INTENDED BASICALLY TO KEEP A DOOR OPEN TO NEGOTIATIONS WITH SYRIA THAT WOULD BE BETTER LEFT AJAR THAN CLOSED. ISRAEL, HE SAID, HAD A MAJOR INTEREST (SO DID THE US) IN KEEPING THE SOVIETS AS ISOLATED AS POSSIBLE FROM AN ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATING PICTURE. OFFERING THE SYRIANS AT LEAST A HYPOTHETICAL OPTION FOR INTERIM AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL SHOULD SERVE THIS OBJECTIVE.

2. WHEN ASKED IF HIS VIEWS WERE SIMILAR TO THOSE OF
SECRET

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DAYAN, PERES REPLIED THEY WERE "PRETTY CLOSE". (DAYAN SINCE MARCH HAS BEEN ARGUING PUBLICLY THAT ISRAEL SHOULD SEEK NON-BELLIGERENCY COMMITMENT FROM EGYPT AND SYRIA IN RETURN FOR TERRITORIAL WITHDRAWALS.

HE HAS ALSO MOST RECENTLY DISTANCED HIMSELF SOMEWHAT FROM PERES' FORMULA RE INTERIM AGREEMENT WITH SYRIA BY SAYING THAT IT WOULD BE UNWISE TO CATEGORICALLY REFUSE TO CONSIDER REMOVAL OF ANY ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS FROM GOLAN AS PART OF SUCH AGREEMENT).

3. COMMENT: PERES' REMARKS ARE REFLECTIVE OF MORE GENERAL ISRAELI AWARENESS OF POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGES OF NEGOTIATING PROCESS THAT EXCLUDES SYRIAN CONCERNS ENTIRELY AND THAT MEANS SHOULD BE FOUND SOMEHOW TO AVOID THIS. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, WE SEE VIRTUALLY NO EVIDENCE OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE IN ISRAELI POSITIONS ON GOLAN, AND PERES' REMARK THAT HIS STATEMENT WAS ESSENTIALLY TACTICAL SHOULD PROBABLY BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE. TOON

SECRET

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